

ity and mortality statistics abroad with those here; that the uses which are made of preventive medicine abroad with that here be taken into account. We could go on at length, but of what avail to argue with those whose minds are made up. What can one expect from Walton Hale Hamilton, the economist head of the research division, a former member of the National Industrial Recovery Board! We know him through a different activity. He was one of those who, under Ray Lyman Wilbur, brought out the report of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care which recommended health insurance; and he wrote his own special report on this thesis, which in itself was but an elucidation of the preconceived object of the committee, from the pen of its director, Henry H. Moore.

President Roosevelt has announced that there will be no measures proposed calling for the necessity of adding to our present heavy tax burden. Furthermore, the President, in his address in Jersey City, gave the profession assurances that it would be consulted and its wishes given attention when changes affecting medical practice came under consideration. Our conception of consultation and consideration does not envisage government spokesmen speaking for their preconceived ideas, long fixed, of how medical practice shall be arranged.

It has been jocularly said that the many governmental functionaries who speak publicly for the administration have so managed things that the Washington Administration can take more sides on any given question than is possible of geometrical demonstration. In this question of medical care, at least, let us have plain, straight thinking and speaking. There should be but one side to the problem. How to provide the highest possible *quality* of medical care to those of the public that need it, and to make provision that financial barriers shall not stop those needing it from getting it.

GUARDING THE SIGHT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

The years of school life are usually the period of greatest stress and danger for eyesight, declared Dr. Edward Jackson of Denver, Colorado, at the annual conference of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, in Columbus, Ohio, recently. Doctor Jackson is Emeritus Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Colorado. Speaking on "Guarding the Sight of School Children," he said:

"The prevention of blindness implies the conservation of partial sight, and is only complete when it is applied early in life. For the majority of people, the years of school life constitute the period of greatest stress and danger to their eyes.

"Accidents are responsible for 16 per cent of the causes of complete blindness, and more than half of these accidents occur to boys and girls under twenty.

"Prevention of disease has of late years been very widely applied, and results have far surpassed those of medicine and surgery in treating disease. Smallpox caused one-eighth of the blindness in the civilized world before vaccination was introduced, and still causes many cases of blindness where it is not practiced. But this proportion of blindness has been completely prevented by vaccination.

"Oliver Wendell Holmes, professor of anatomy, said that it was necessary to go back three generations to prevent some forms of disease. Many have approved of the statement, but we have not yet begun to apply prevention to one whole generation. Care of the eyes during school life is an attempt to make such an application to the prevention of blindness.

"In the school, we have light that is very inferior to the light of outdoor living. The sun at different times of the day gives light of 1,000 to 10,000 foot candles. In schoolrooms we rarely find light about 100 foot candles on the desk of the students, and sometimes it runs down to ten or five—or even two or one—and the children's eyes are expected to stand their school work under such bad conditions.

"Anyone can judge the effect of poor light by taking a telephone directory, which always has small print in it, and looking at it first in an ordinary indoor light, and then holding it where the sun will shine upon it. No one can miss the lesson of greater ease in using powerful light.

"When people think the light is too bright, it is usually because they have been trying to look at it. Our sources of light are not generally to be used like Neon signs, but to illuminate the desks or studies which we are trying to carry on. In the schoolrooms, many errors are tolerated with reference to the lighting; teachers and pupils need to be instructed in how to give their eyes the best chance by appropriate arrangement of the light.

"The correction of optical defects of the eye has been widely stressed and deserves all of the emphasis that has been placed upon it; but even with the optical defects exactly corrected, care and moderation need to be used for even the best eyes.

"The common causes of blindness that come with old age, like cataract and glaucoma, or hardening of the eyeball, have generally been threatening or actually progressing for years before they cause blindness. In a person of sixty-five with beginning senile cataract, it is probable that it will be fifteen years before he is unable to read and probably twenty years before he has to have the cataract removed. This time allows abundant opportunity for preventing the diseases that destroy sight in old age."

A PERTINENT QUESTION

Is it common sense to let a healthy, young mother die in childbirth at the very beginning of her productive and creative years because of *ignorance and negligence*? Motherhood is a question facing not only expectant mothers and fathers, but the community at large. Each community must recognize its responsibility in the education of its young people for the responsibilities of parenthood, so that they may know how and when and where to seek and secure adequate medical and nursing care when a baby is on the way.

What should young people know to prepare them for parenthood? There are ten simple facts which should be included in the education of every young person. Each should know that:

1. A baby lives for nine months in its mother's body before it is born.
2. An expectant mother should seek the advice of a competent doctor as soon as she *thinks* a baby is coming.
3. Throughout pregnancy the doctor should be consulted regularly so that he may be on guard for the first suggestion of beginning abnormalities.
4. When in doubt, the doctor's advice should be secured; it is better than that of friends or relatives or neighbors.
5. The mother's daily routine should be based on common-sense living—no burning the candle at both ends.
6. The responsibility for having a baby is as much the father's as the mother's; he should help his wife follow the doctor's instructions, boost her spirits when she is down, and relieve her of worry and fatiguing physical work.
7. If the baby is to be born in a hospital, a good one should be selected; approval by the American Medical Association Council on Hospitals or the American College of Surgeons is the hallmark of a good institution.
8. If the baby is to be born at home, preparations should be made in advance under the direction of the doctor or nurse.
9. The mother should remain in bed at least ten days after the baby's arrival, and should do her first mothercraft under supervision.
10. A detailed plan should be made for the baby's care before it arrives so that things will run smoothly from the very beginning.

All parents should see that their children, as they grow to maturity, know thoroughly these basic facts. If they shirk their responsibility, they are missing one of the greatest challenges which comes to a parent. It is also the responsibility of various community organizations to help train young people for parenthood. The school should endeavor to help each pupil develop a wholesome attitude toward the facts of life; the church a high moral code; the settlement houses, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and similar organizations a strong, sturdy character. If these important units in our society shoulder fully their responsibilities in preparing young people for parenthood, we shall find not only a reduction in our maternal deaths, but also an improvement in marital relations.